

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

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DIME NOVEL SKETCHES NO. 60

NEW TIP TOP WEEKLY

A continuation of Tip Top Weekly narrating the adventures of Frank Merriwell, Jr. Began August 3, 1912 and ended with No. 136 on March 6, 1915. Colored cover, 32 pages.

THE ANATOMY OF DIME NOVELS

No. 1 — Nick Carter

By J. Edward Leithead

In the house at Central Park West Nick finds a young woman who certainly resembles Inez Novarro, although there is a quietness about her, a look in her eyes which makes him doubt. He does not use his hand cuffs, as he had expected to do. The girl apparently is being victimized by her own sister—and their brother Pancho. Carmen had been separated from the other two early in childhood, saw Inez again but three years previous and found her giving her criminal tendencies full play. Pancho was under Inez' thumb; Carmen had remained with them only in the hope of saving her brother from the gallows at some future time. For her twin sister there is no hope—the bad and the good, the difference between two.

Nick decides to help Carmen; at the same time he realizes that the absence of Inez from the house means that she and Pancho and a henchman Gomez have some plan to take Morris Carruthers from his guards, believing Nick had been drawn away (probably they had watched him approach the house in Central Park West and taken a hansom cab or a hack to the Grand Central.) As Nick afterward learned, this was the way of it, but Inez, Pancho and Gomez, discovering Chick with the escort, and bewildered at seeing in the station a man who was Nick Carter or his double, were inactive long enough for the prisoner and his escort to pass through the gateway to the train to Ossining.

Meantime, an explosion rocks the house in Central Park West. Nick and Carmen come within inches of being killed, but the detective gets her

through to the outside. Another of Inez' diabolical schemes, this time to destroy both the detective and her sister. It was a gas explosion; the cover illustration (again by Edward Johnson) shows Nick, Carmen and a policeman on the street corner near the burning house. The caption: "Officer," said the detective, "I am Nick Carter. See that nobody save firemen and policemen enters that house. It was a gas explosion; shut off the main at once!"

Nick takes the badly shaken Carmen Novarro to his Madison Avenue home. Inez, Pancho and Gomez, returning, baffled, from the Grand Central, see the pair enter the Carter dwelling. Then Nick comes out; he has left Carmen in his study, reading a magazine, while he sets forth for the Grand Central to see what, if anything, happened. Gomez, getting out of the hack in which the trio came from the station, shadows Nick down the avenue. Inez turns to Pancho in the hack, then speaks to the driver. The hack halts in front of the Carter house. Inez gets out.

"Come," she called to her brother. "There is no time to lose."

"The side of Pancho's coat bulged suspiciously as if he carried something there, but it was not till they both had ascended the steps and were standing in Nick Carter's very door that the object was revealed.

"Then, however, Pancho unbuttoned his coat, permitting a half-grown ape to leap upon the doorstep.

"Up, Roberto, up!" Pancho ordered in Spanish; and the ape, after indulging in one intelligent look into his

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master's eyes, leaped upon the railing of the front step, and from there ran nimbly and surely as a fly up the brownstone side of the house. He gained the cornice at the top of the door easily. From there to the ledge in front of an open window on the second floor was merely a slight leap for him, and in a moment more he had disappeared inside the house.

"While this was taking place neither Inez nor Pancho uttered a word; but two or three minutes after the ape had vanished, Inez leaned forward eagerly in an attitude of listening. The knob of the door had rattled ever so faintly; then it rattled again—and slowly the door swung open while the small ape grimaced at them from the aperture.

"The way is evidently clear," said Inez. "Take your ape and return to the hack, Pancho. Keep it where it is so you can see the window over the door. If I call you, come to me at once. I will leave the door on the latch."

Inez finds Carmen in Nick's study. Apparently the house is deserted except for these two. There are hard, hot words; about the gas explosion, about Nick substituting Chick for himself at the Grand Central. Inez asks if he has gone to the station. Carmen nods.

"I could do nothing for Carruthers," said Inez. "He was too well guarded. There was no chance of any kind. He is inside the prison at Sing Sing by this time."

"Let us hope that he will never leave it until he is carried out feet first," said Carmen, coldly.

"Inez cursed her. 'You have told Nick Carter our life history, I suppose.'"

"I have told him all that seemed necessary."

"And he is quite convinced you are as much an angel as I am a devil."

"I think he is quite convinced I have never willingly committed a sinful act."

"Indeed!" Inez was calculating shrewdly. If she could dupe Carter

into believing she was Carmen when he returned from the Grand Central—

She launched herself at Carmen, catching the latter off balance. There was real hair-pulling, punching rough-house there on the floor of Nick's study for several minutes, and Carmen was no weakling. But she couldn't fight chloroform . . . "Inez gradually released her hold on Carmen, and at last raised herself to her feet, and seizing one of the magazines from the table she fanned herself with it vigorously.

" . . . she began a close and careful examination of the apparel and the appearance of Carmen. Their hair was done in the same fashion as always. The combs which held it in place were the same pattern. There was in fact only one point of difference in their entire costumes, and that consisted of a delicate neck chain which Carmen wore. Inez removed it and placed it about her own neck, changing her own to the neck of Carmen."

She hurries through the hallway to the open window by which the ape entered, signals Pancho. The brother carries the unconscious Carmen to the lower floor. Then he half carries her out to the hack, pretending she is ill.

Nick Carter returns home, having learned that Carruthers and his police guard had got off on the train to Ossining without incident. In his study the detective finds Inez, whom he mistakes for Carmen; he had noticed the delicate chain worn by Carmen as he was accustomed to notice small details. And it is there on Inez' neck; both the girl and the detective are startled, therefore, when the voice of Chick Carter calls from the foot of the stairway:

"I've got her, Nick! I've got Inez and Pancho—both!"

Nick descends the stairs. He learns that Chick, returning from Sing Sing, had been walking on the street when, in a passing hack, he recognized Inez (as he thought) and Pancho. Aided by the police, he had arrested them but

"Inez" is in a dazed state, says she was chloroformed. Two cops are with them in the hack. "'And that door-opening ape," adds Chick.

Nick is puzzled. Upstairs, "Carmen" had pleaded with him not to see "Inez." This chloroform business, though . . . Chick can't be mistaken. Nick directs him to bring the girl into the reception room and waited; and presently the woman whom he supposed to be Inez tottered across the threshold, and Chick, on the other side, closed the door behind her.

"For a moment Carmen stood there falteringly, facing the detective. Then she moved across the floor until she stood directly in front of the window, facing the light.

"Look at me," she said weakly. "Can you tell the difference?"

"Nick only smiled. He did not move from the position he had taken.

"It will be a difficult game to play, Inez," he said, coldly. "I have partly promised your sister that if you and Pancho will leave the country altogether, never to return, you shall be permitted to do so."

"I am not Inez," she replied calmly. "I am Carmen. Wait," she insisted as Nick was about to reply; "I can prove it. Look."

"She placed one hand in her bosom and drew forth a half leaf torn from a magazine.

"What is it?" asked Nick.

"I tore it from the magazine I was reading, when Inez interrupted me, in your study. I was going to use it to mark my place, and when I put my hand here in search of the weapon I have carried for three years, I left the torn page there. Here it is. It will fit the page from which it was torn."

Nick calls in Chick from the hallway and "places handcuffs in his hands.

"Go up to my study," said Nick, "and put them on the young woman you will find there. She is Inez Navarro. This is Carmen."

Pancho's trained chimp was sent to the Bronx Zoo.

In the concluding story of the series, #412, *The Point of a Dagger*, or, *The Criminal Queen's Madness*, Inez ranges on the loose again, makes a last desperate effort to dicker for the release of Morris Carruthers. With the assistance of a spurious "special envoy from Peru," Ramon Del Puente, she gets Nick cornered, knocked out with a blackjack (but not in her dainty hand) and tries to make a deal. "I ask at your hands the liberty of Morris Carruthers. I offer you, in return, your own life, the life of Carmen Navarro y de Costa, and my promise to take myself and followers out of the United States—never to return. Will you bargain with me?"

Nick had become quite fond of the sioe-eyed lovely Carmen Navarro y de Costa (the last her mother's maiden name which she sometimes used); Ethel Carter, Nick's wife, had been dead quite a while, murdered by Dazaar; there was the breath of romance in the air. Nick would have gone any lengths to protect Carmen; but, even if he would and could accept Inez' promise as something she would fulfill (which was very doubtful), how could he stop the march to the electric chair of Morris Carruthers, whose lawyers' appeal for a new trial had been turned down. Inez' mental state borders on madness when she is blocked at every point; she comes to think that spoiling her sister's beauty will hurt both Carmen and Nick more than if she stabbed her twin sister to death.

"Carmen, call me mad if you will! I have no longer anything to live for but revenge. You will not be conscious while I am destroying that lovely face, exactly like my own. But . . . I shall wait for you to open your eyes. Then I will point my finger at you, and I will say to Nick Carter:

"There is Carmen! Look at her now! Where is all the beauty you worshiped? And he will recoil from you in horror for you will be a hideous thing."

The detective was outside the room at that moment. "Nick Carter had

thought a dozen times of throwing himself against the door and bursting it from the hinges, for he knew he had strength enough to do that; but it was a dangerous proceeding while Inez knelt there in front of her victim, with the deadly dagger in her hand.

"He thought of every expedient possible and only one appeared feasible. Just as he had decided to put it into practice, a hand touched his elbow and he knew that Patsy was at his side.

"Be ready, Patsy!" he whispered

"Then he tapped gently against the door, still keeping his eye at the keyhole.

"Inez started and turned her head. 'Who is there?'

"I," replied Nick, muffling his voice so that it was unrecognizable.

"Who are you?" Inez was now on her feet, moving away from Carmen."

The door cracked open. "The instant she appeared, Nick seized her in his arms, wrapping his own around her so that hers were pinned against her sides. Patsy tore off his coat and threw it over her head." She was fighting with the strength of a madwoman, biting, kicking. Powerful as Nick Carter was, with Patsy to aid him, it was no quick tussle to subdue her. Perhaps mercifully, her heart failed her; she was dead before Nick and Patsy left the room with Carmen. Thus died Inez Navarro, the criminal queen, and not so much later the master criminal, Morris Carruthers, went to the death chair at Sing Sing; but jauntily. His last words were:

"Tell Carter that he wins out; he does, really!"

I have no doubt that all six of these stories, published in 1904, were reprinted in Magnet or New Magnet Library, but I have not been able to trace them there.

About a year later, Dec. 9, 1905, in #467, The Man from Nevada, or, Nick Carter's Cowboy Client, Fred Dey or Nick, rather, made mention of Livingstone Carruthers on page 13 to a police inspector in recalling an inci-

dent of the earliest case:

"Inspector," said Nick, 'did you ever hear of a man going overboard in mid-ocean who was afterward saved?'

"Yes; I think I have."

"Don't you remember that my assistant Chick did that very thing once, long ago, when we were running down Livingstone Carruthers in that 'Tracked Across the Atlantic' case?'

"I think I do remember that."

"Do you remember that in that case Chick was drugged when he was thrown overboard by Carruthers? That it was in the dead of night? That a high sea was running? That the chances were a thousand millions against one that he would perish? And yet he was saved."

The next time the name of Carruthers came up was in 1908. Three issues of New Nick Carter Weekly, Nos. 607, The Mysterious Mr. Peters, or, Nick Carter's Unknown Enemy, #608, A Woman at Bay, or, Nick Carter's Greatest Burglary Case and #609, The Balloon Tragedy, or, Nick Carter in Extreme Peril, resurrected Livingston Carruthers, this time without the final "e" on the baptismal name. As Nick explains to another character in the trilogy:

"Carruthers, you understand, is the son of one of the shrewdest criminals I ever knew, and he bears the same name."

In the first tale (#607) Carruthers is traveling under the alias of 'Peters.' His wife, the former Janice Maitland—"blonde, with black eyes, a startling combination"—was known in artistic circles as "La Janice, had been an artist's model in Paris and was herself an artist of no mean ability."

Radcliffe, an American artist, wanted her to pose for him. He didn't know what he was getting into; that La Janice had a mind as crooked as her husband's—"Nick persisted in regarding Janice as the greater criminal and the one possessing the brains of the twain."

Nick hadn't come to this conclusion until after the great burglary case. It took slick, skilful planning and exe-

cution. A diamond merchant of Broadway had been robbed of "half a million dollars in cash and precious stones." His two safes, cracked by a master hand, could easily be seen from the street by the patrolman on his rounds and he was certain there'd been nobody in the store at any time he had passed. Yet someone, perhaps two cracksmen, had operated on those safes for quite sometime and eventually made a getaway with the very considerable loot.

Questioning the jeweler, Nick elicits the information that a couple answering the description of Carruthers and his beautiful wife had been in the store and looked over some jewelry a short time before the burglary. The merchant hadn't noticed much about them except that they were a handsome couple, but Nick, knowing he is on the trail of something, keeps firing questions until the jeweler suddenly remembers a faint click while the pair were in the store. Nick glances over the showcase at the empty safes, clearly in view from where he stands. He asks the jeweler if the sound was like a camera being triggered; it could have been that, the jeweler agrees, but he saw no camera, and why—

Nick Carter is certain the cop on the beat is correct as far as the latter knows; that he passed the jewelry store several times the previous night, tried the door, looked in the window and saw nothing amiss. Yet the safes were looted—as though a partition had separated them and the burglars from the eyes of the law. A partition! Nick knows La Janice is an artist, and the son of Carruthers an expert cracksmen. Why couldn't a hidden camera have snapped a picture of those safes, afterward been enlarged, and from the enlargement a painting on canvas reproduced by the skilled brush of Janice, in dimensions matching the real safes, and high and wide enough, once stretched on a frame, to screen the safes and the safe-crackers from the street!

The detective locates the burglar

suspects registered at the Hotel Mammoth (Dey's name for the Waldorf-Astoria) as the Count and Countess Sachelli. Escape, with the loot of the "great burglary," has already been planned. Despite the cleverness of the Carruthers clan, Nick, as already mentioned, believed Janice was "the one possessing the brains of the twain." He was right, too. Janice had thought of photographing the safes, of painting that screen which enabled them to carry through the robbery. She also foresaw that every exit from New York City was likely to be blocked by the police, supported by Carter & Company, once Nick picked up the trail; every exit but the air route to a getaway. Therefore, a balloon was the answer to the husband-and-wife safe-cracker team's flight problem. And it was Janice who thought of it.

Unfortunately, when Nick attempted to arrest them, they captured and took him along with them. The misfortune was more theirs than his, although he nearly lost his life. There was a thieves' falling out after they were up in the air, breezing along above the tree-tops and climbing for altitude. Nick was helpless in a corner of the swaying basket while Janice and Livingston were at odds. "He (Nick) saw her reach for the rip-cord where it dangled into the basket. Or was it the valve-cord?"

The balloon began a rapid descent, struck a tall tree, tipped at a crazy angle. Headlong went its passengers (the cover depicts this tragedy and is very well done by Artist J. A. Cahill, who also did the covers for #607 and #608). Nick Carter, tangled in the limbs of a wide-spreading oak, is the only survivor. Janice has a broken neck, Livingston a broken neck plus a fatal bullet-wound. But the loot is intact, or nearly so.

Nick is through with the criminally inclined Carruthers clan—Livingstone, his brother Morris and his son Livingston, Jr. do not appear again in the Nick Carter histories.

These last three numbers in New Nick Carter Weekly were reprinted

in New Magnet Library #687, repeated in #1252, both times under the title, The Lady of Shadows.

The End

A DIME NOVEL COLLECTOR'S BOOK SHELF

WHO'S WHO OF BOYS' WRITERS, by Brian Doyle. Published by Brian Doyle, 14A Clarendon Drive, London S.W. 15. 99 pages, 15 shillings (\$2.20). 250-illustrations. Contains the names of 750 English authors and their pseudonyms. A few American authors whose works appeared in England are also given. A very worthwhile work. (Information sent in by Stanley A. Kachon.)

EXCERPTS FROM LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Eddie: I have just received a copy of the Buffalo Bill Stories with colored covers published by Gold Star Books. They resemble the early yellow back dime novels. How many have been published?—Buckskin Bill Randolph. (Gold Star Books will be publishing dime novel reprints through December. Two Buffalo Bills were published in August, two Wild West Weeklies in September, and alternately through December. If sales are good they will continue indefinitely.)

Dear Edward: I have been meaning to renew my subscription to the Dime Novel Roundup. So here is the enclosed check. I guess I would miss the little paper.—Walter A. Higgins, Bath, Me.

Dear Eddie: I was mugged and robbed by some fellows of \$20 in the hallway of my home, my keys stolen and some bottom teeth broken. My right side still hurts and I can't sneeze yet. Brooklyn is getting to be a jungle. Still looking for Alger titles that are not too common.—Morris Teicher, Brooklyn, N. Y.

Dear Eddie: In his reminiscences, Thomas W. Hanshaw stated as follows: "I however wrote all the Gus Wil-

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liams stories, SOME of the Harrigan & Hart stories, all the Police Captain Williams stories and all the 'A United States Detective Stories.' I wrote none of the N. S. Wood stories." He stated that he met N. S. Wood only once and did not know if he actually authored the stories bearing his name. He goes on further and states that he wrote NONE of the "Genevieve Ulmer stories." He wrote "The Child Stealer" under the pseudonym J. T. Brougham. (This appeared from #30-37 of Young Men of America.)—Stanley Pachon, Bethlehem, Pa.

Dear Sir: Would you please send me any information you have concerning dime novels. I heard you publish periodicals for collectors and I will appreciate any help you can give me. Thank you. — Maureen Mintzer Age: 11. (And only yesterday I was wondering if dime novel collecting would pass on with our generation. Ed.)

Dear Mr. LeBlanc: I'm trying to learn if Wide Awake Library No. 403 "Detective Sketches" is the only one containing a number of detective short stories. Are there any others in this series? I am in the process of preparing a bibliography of detective short stories and would like to include all titles appearing in dime novels.—Elmore H. Mundell, Jr., 11510 E. Evergreen, Portage, Ind. 46368. (Can anyone help Mr. Mundell?)

Gentlemen: Please quote the prices for The Spider, The Shadow and a few Western magazines.—T. R. Benson, Box 24, Danielsville, Ga.

Dear Mr. LeBlanc: I am enjoying very much the article on "The Golden Argosy." I would like to see more articles on the old pulps. Also articles

on the great pulp writers, such as Max Brand, H. Bedford-Jones, George F. Worts, etc.—Michael Fogaris, Cassaic, N. J.

Back numbers Reckless Ralph's Dime Novel Roundup, Nos. 1 to 237 for sale. Some reprints, all interesting, 12 for \$1.00 or all 237 numbers for \$18.00 postpaid.

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I certify that the statements made by
me above are correct and complete.

Edward T. LeBlanc

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Senator Muldoon, \$1.50. (All in Wide Awake Library).

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De Witt 223 page Indian novel, "Wacousta," \$2.50.

Leslie's Boys and Girls Weekly. Two volumes originally the publisher's file copies. Vol. 8 #183 to 208 (1870) Vol. 11 #261 to 286 (1872). Bound. \$6.50 each.

Wide Awake Library, bound volume. 39 numbers between #45 and 690, includes #256 and 257, "The Flying Ship of the Pacific," \$35.00.

Detective Library #547, 557, 562, 564, 567 all contain Old King Brady chasing the James Boys. The lot for \$20.00. Ten miscellaneous detective novels in this library, \$15.00. Pinkerton detective, Jerry Owens novels #475, 477. The lot for \$5.00.

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